THE RAGTIMER

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 1976

PUBLISHED BY
THE RAGTIME SOCIETY
DEDICATED TO THE PRESERVATION OF CLASSICAL RAGTIME

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As a service to members, THE RAGTIME SOCIETY INC. is currently in a position to have orders filled for the following records. Price quoted includes handling charges and postage.

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PRIVATELY PRINTED SHEET MUSIC FOR SALE

Note: We have added a new section to our catalogue under the above heading. The music listed consists of compositions, by members of The Ragtime Society which they have privately published, in commercial format. The Society would be pleased to hear from other members who have published ragtime compositions in acceptable commercial form.

(The following are available at $1. 00 each postpaid)

Please Note: Minimum order $2. 00

PM-701	Scotty Dog Rag (David R. Lee) 1974
PM-702	Pussy Cat Rag (David R. Lee) 1975
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PM-704	Pumpkin Pie Rag (David R. Lee) 1975
PM-705	Salad Dressing Rag (David R. Lee) 1975
PM-706	Mississauga Rag (Austin E. Kitchen) 1974

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BACK ISSUES OF THE RAGTIMER

See page 3 of the 1976 Catalogue. The availability of complete years is beginning to shorten down. If you are putting off the placing of an order, don't wait too long!

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FOUNDED 1962
INCORPORATED 1970

THE RAGTIME SOCIETY
INCORPORATED

is a non - profit corporation having the following objects:

To preserve classical ragtime music and to pursue such other activities as shall serve to maintain and develop interest in classical ragtime music and music related thereto.

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RAGTIME...
UNDER YOUR HAT

Another year for RAGTIME begins -- and every passing year brings the celebration of one more anniversary to mark our revival of ragtime.

For a very large section of the membership in our "Society of Ragtimers" who are also citizens of the United States of America, the year of 1976 has a special historical meaning. Two hundred years ago, a Declaration of Independence was signed on July 4, 1776 which transformed the colonial status of their existence into citizenship of independent states. A new spirit was born that changed a rebellion into a confident march to freedom and the ultimate establishment of a mighty sovereign nation.

Canadian members of THE RAGTIME SOCIETY can look with pride and satisfaction at the thousands of miles of friendly border separating our two nations and stretching, as it does, from the Atlantic to the Pacific oceans. It is living proof of a mutual desire that goodwill shall prevail between our peoples as they travel back and forth across that open border. It is a pleasure on behalf of our SOCIETY to warmly wish our neighbours and members to the South a "Happy Birthday" as they celebrate and remember the beginnings of their country during this anniversary year.

One wonders if a lick or two of the ragtime beat got into the spirit of '76 as the fife and drum led marching feet.

No one, now living, can give us an eye-witness account of the American Revolution. For ragtime it is

(continued on page 4)

THE RAGTIMER is the official publication of THE RAGTIME SOCIETY Inc., P.O. Box 520, Weston, Ontario, Canada, M9N 3N3. All rights of THE RAGTIMER are reserved to the Corporation. Membership is $8.00 per year and includes all issues of THE RAGTIMER published during the current year.

different. Our only honourary life member, EUBIE BLAKE, was born before ragtime developed, took part in its development from the very beginning and at an active 93 years of age is still composing, performing and talking about ragtime. Born in 1883, EUBIE is celebrating his 93rd birthday on February 7th this year. Another important anniversary! We all wish EUBIE a very "Happy Birthday" as he begins the 94th year of a lifetime which has been largely devoted to the creation of a wonderful and lasting American music so much enjoyed by his fellow Americans and by music lovers around the world.

During 1976 we hope to merit your continued support. This is the first issue of THE RAGTIMER for the current year. Two important items are included with the same mailing:

(1) Your 1976 membership card. Please add your signature for validation purposes.

(2) Your copy of the SOCIETY CATALOGUE for 1976. This edition contains new items as well as necessary revisions.

We use your last P. O. address on record for mailing purposes. Don't forget to let us know promptly of any change of address during the year.

Finally, let us bring up the subject of 1976 resolutions. We urge every member of THE RAGTIME SOCIETY to resolve to introduce at least one person, now walking in the darkness, to the delights of ragtime music as a contribution to the "RAGTIME CAUSE".

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JOHN ARPIN - TORONTO'S MOST POLISHED PERFORMER OF RAGTIME AND SHOW TUNES

(Our back cover pictures John surrounded by a collection of ragtime compositions. Star Week is a weekly supplement of The Toronto Star. Frank Rasky, Star staff writer wrote the following on Wednesday, December 17, 1975.)

John Arpin, the pianist-singer with a repertoire of an estimated 5, 000 tunes, is the musician with a soft sound. He has been performing at the 180-seat Chelsea Bun lounge ever since the 800-suite Chelsea Inn on Gerrard St. W. had its official opening six weeks ago.

And the 39-year-old classically trained pianist from Port McNicoll, Ont., a veteran of Toronto's cocktail lounge circuit for almost two decades, is a perfect choice for the relaxed atmosphere that the new hotel is trying to establish in its cosy, English-style room.

Arpin, probably the town's most polished performer of Scott Joplin's ragtime tunes and Jerome Kern's Broadway ballads, ripples smoothly through his repertoire from 5 to 8 p. m. at the lounge's eight-seat piano bar. From 9 p. m. to 1 a. m. he's joined by drummer Dean Macdonald and bassist Joe Lucchetta and then the John Arpin Trio provide subdued, non-rock dance music for the 80 couples who can be accommodated on the spacious dance floor. Whether he's a solo act or leading his trio, Arpin can be depended upon for his impeccable taste and quiet class.

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RECORD REVIEW

by
TEX
WYNDHAM

Golden Crest CRS-31042 'The Road From Rags To Jazz', by The New England Conservatory Ragtime Ensemble, conducted by Gunther Schuller.

Selections: Harlem Rag, Swipesey, Frog Legs Rag, Kinklets, Silver Swan Rag*, Grace And Beauty, Ojos Criollos, Heliotrope Bouquet, Cataract Rag, The See'r, Ann Street, Ragtime From 'Parade', Ragtime, Pastime Rag No. 4, Charleston Rag, Kitten On The Keys, Grandpa's Spells (ragtime), Grandpa's Spells (jazz), Smokehouse Blues, Sensation, Fig Leaf Rag*, Ophelia Rag, Hilarity Rag, Ragtime Nightingale.

Personnel: Robert Winiker, trumpet; Bruce Creditor, clarinet; Thomas Foulds, trombone; Mary O'Reilly, Ann Ourada, violins; Virginia Izzo, viola; Bruce Coppock, cello; Stephanie Jutt, flute/piccolo; Judith Benford, bassoon; Lynda Jacquin, oboe; Lawrence Ragent, Susan Graham**, French horns; Myron Romanul, piano/cymbalom; Jerome Harris, guitar/banjo; Edwin Barker, bass; Robert Carriker, tuba; Lawrence Fried, drums/percussion.

* piano solo
** plays on "Pastime Rag No. 4" only.

The NECRE at its best gives you unbeatable orchestrated "classic" ragtime -- rhythm light, lilting and danceable; every note round and clean (and in first-class fidelity); and zestful interpretations of arrangements that preserve the essence of the music while skillfully using the panoply of sounds available to a full orchestra as a means of spotlighting and enhancing each tune's unique features. Much of this 2-Lp set is right on target; moreover, as the NECRE steps away from the exclusive concentration on Scott Joplin that characterized its previous albums, it gets a chance to show some new facets of its personality -- "Hilarity", living right up to the title, and "Ophelia", for example, capture the bold and building strut that marks Scott's best rags, while "Pastime", taken slowly and mysteriously, effectively focuses on the little eccentricities that Matthews built into the themes of each of his five masterpieces. On the other hand, parts of the program don't work well -- in an attempt to force the selections into a chronology that covers music which influenced or was influenced by ragtime, Schuller comes up with five semi-classical works that won't say much to ragtimers plus two attempts at jazz which, in their unswinging inflexibility, fail in their purpose of pointing out basic differences between ragtime and jazz. I come out cheering on a little over half the tracks, with many of the rest being at least on the sunny side of average. If you haven't heard the NECRE, try one of their others first; give this one, overall, about a B.

* * *

Columbia M 33185 'Scott Joplin: The Entertainer Ballet', by The London Festival Ballet Orchestra, conducted by Grant Hossack, with Michael Bassett, piano.

Selections: The Family, The Siren, The Theft/Paragon, Journeying On, Troops, Act 2 Opening, Dance Hall, Siren's Car/Solace, Travelling, Act 2 Waltz, Pas De Trois: Finale.

The selections making up this beautifully recorded and performed (by a large orchestra) Lp are comprised of material from 19 of Scott Joplin's compositions, combined by Hossack to supply the music for a modern-dress ballet version of "The Prodigal Son". As with movie soundtrack albums, the numbers are presented out of their intended context; thus, sudden mood changes within a piece may jar the listener when they would pass unnoticed to the viewer of the ballet. In this case, the program, though pervaded with optimism, too often lacks musical coherence; "The Theft/Paragon", for example, is simply a portion of "Harmony Club Waltz", abruptly shifting tempo and mood into an extract from "Leola", and proceeding after an equally abrupt shift into excerpts from "Paragon Rag". One wishes that Hossack had given us more examples of Joplin reworked in a novel and logical way ("The Siren" welds the first half of "The Entertainer" to the last half of "Fig Leaf Rag" in a slow, sexy rendition that presents a new, listenable and valid perception of those works; similarly, "Troops" weaves "Rosebud" and "March Majestic" into a seamless and stirring pattern), but with so much Joplin available on Lp, including orchestrated numbers, I find the disc more frustrating than enjoyable and, on the whole, dispensable. For curiosity-seekers.

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Herwin 403 'Piano Ragtime Of The Forties'

Selections and Artists: Caprice Rag, Daintiness Rag - James P. Johnson; Pork And Beans, Shy And Sly - Luckey Roberts; Twelfth Street Rag - Euday L. Bowman; Lily Rag, Delmar Rag - Charles Thompson; Limehouse Blues - Cliff Jackson; Whitewash Man, Black And White Rag; Climax Rag - Ralph Sutton; Rumpus Rag, Parlor Social - Don Ewell; Del Mar Rag - Joe Sullivan; Spaghetti Rag Medley - Freeman Clark; Freddy - J. Lawrence Cook.

Available from: Herwin Records, Inc., P. O. Box 306, Glen Cove, New York 11542.

The unifying features of this excellent compilation by ragtime authority David A. Jasen are (1) all of these solos (a few have rhythm accompaniment) were recorded during the 1940s and (2) they reflect a fast, hot, technically impressive approach to ragtime -- one that will appeal to fans of traditional jazz piano as well as ragophiles. The Harlem cutting contest tradition is much in evidence in Luckey Roberts' two flashy numbers (special treats for ragtimers in light of his meager output of rag recordings), in the catch-me-if-you-can tempo chosen by Johnson for "Caprice Rag", and in the reverse stride and other New York licks used by Jackson to build up and drive home "Limehouse Blues". Flipping the disc, you will hear what the next generation did with East Coast ragtime, as Ralph Sutton generates irresistible rhythm with crystal-clear articulation, while Don Ewell injects a darker, guttier, blusier atmosphere into his two stompers. Spiced with a little raggedy midwestern tickling from Thompson and Bowman, and even some lighter, more commercial, sleeve-garter stuff from Clark and Cook, it's an enjoyable Lp of very

accomplished, steaming piano. Highly recommended (unless you want your ragtime as close as possible to the classical music/ragtime border).

* * *

Boot BMC-3004 'Rag-Ma-Tazz' by the Canadian Brass.

Selections: The Entertainer, Pleasant Moments, The Favorite, The Sycamore, Euphonic Sounds, Rosebud March, Fig Leaf Rag, The Easy Winners, Paul Bunyan Suite, Ragtime For Brass, Days Before Yesterday, Golliwog's Cake Walk, Slim Trombone, Lassus Trombone, Canadian Brass Rag.

Personnel: Ron Romm, Fred Mills, trumpets; Graeme Page, French horn; Gene Watts, trombone; Chuck Daellenbach, tuba.

Available from: Boot Records Limited, 1343 Matheson Blvd. W., Mississauga, Ontario, L4W 1R1, or Boot Records, Inc., 1818 Division St., Nashville, Tenn. 37203.

This unique Lp, for example, with its legitimate approach and large helping of non-rag and near-rag on Side Two, is clearly for the classically-oriented ragophile. The excellent recording does full justice to the quintet's impeccably-blended tone, while the musicians' technique is fully up to the job of faithfully transcribing the eight Joplin rags (minus one strain on each of "Entertainer" and "Fig Leaf", and omitting many repeats) to fit this unusual instrumentation. Tempos are brisk, the sound is full-bodied but not heavy, and the approach is at once spirited and reserved. I would have liked a higher proportion of classic rags ("Canadian Brass Rag", however, is an intricate, rousing novelty composed just for this group that I'd definitely keep), but overall, the disc is successful, novel and interesting.

* * *

Golden Crest CRS-31040 'You Tell 'Em Ivories - Milton Kaye Plays Zez Confrey'

Selections: Kitten On The Keys, Jack In The Box, Grandfather's Clock, You Tell 'Em Ivories, Valse Mirage, My Pet, Dizzy Fingers, Greenwich Witch, Tune For Mademoiselle, Coaxing The Piano, Smart Alec, Poor Buttermilk, Jay Walk, Elihu's Harmonica.

Golden Crest CRS-31035 'The Classic Rags Of Joe Lamb - Vol. II', piano solos by Milton Kaye.

Selections: Chasin' The Chippies, Patricia Rag, Alabama Rag, Excelsior Rag, Ethiopia Rag, Walper House Rag, Old Home Rag, Scott Joplin's Dream, Ragged Rapids Rag, Contentment Rag, Toad Stool Rag, Cottontail Rag, Good And Plenty Rag.

Zez Confrey's works are designed not only to be cohensive musical illustrations of the concepts inherent in their titles, but also, like other material belonging to "novelty" piano, to show off a performer with virtuoso keyboard technique -- such as Milton Kaye. These solos, generally delivered at a bright-but-not-excessive clip and supported by an appealing, slightly funky rhythm, do considerable credit to both Kaye and Confrey, with every drop of melody and warmth wrung out of a piano style that sometimes can be stand-offish and mechanistic. Kaye's own insertions are appropriately

flamboyant and wryly humorous, while those who yearn for the more typical blinding speed of novelty ragtime will get a whole Lp's worth out of "Dizzy Fingers", a breath-taking rendition.

Moving from the sublime to the execrable, I note that the Lamb album includes four previously unrecorded and unpublished (to my knowledge) titles and that one of them ("Dream") is attributed jointly to Lamb and Scott Joplin; that fact alone may cause dedicated ragtimers to buy the disc to hear the tunes (I would), but if there is anything else to be said in favor of this one, you won't read it in this column. Kaye seems to lack interest, omitting repeats to the point of major amputations on some tracks, madly rushing through a couple of others, adding personal touches that too often seem to mock the material rather than enhance it, and mostly making a mess of things. A good man gone wrong here.

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Kicking Mule KM 114 'Famous Ragtime Guitar Solos' by Ton Van Bergeyk.

Selections: Buffalo Rag, Atlanta Rag, Felicity Rag, Blake's Breakdown, Grizzly Bear, Ragtime Nightmare, Silver Swan, King Porter Stomp, Pineapple Rag, Smoky Mokes, Powder Rag, Original Rags, Harlem Rag, American Beauty Rag.

Available from: Kicking Mule Record Company, Box 3233, Berkeley, California 94703.

Several of Van Bergeyk's arrangements (guitarists may obtain all of them from Kicking Mule) are surprisingly faithful transcriptions of the piano scores; "Grizzly Bear", for example, keeps the descending bass countermelody in the first strain, and "Pine-apple" retains the left-hand trio figures. Van Bergeyk's execution, however, is no better than adequate; while he doesn't hit any clams, his renditions are labored and generally lack the crisp confidence that would bring them to life. Medium or slower-tempo tracks ("Pineapple", "Original", "Grizzly" and "Nightmare") are quite enjoyable, but they're in the minority. I could give better marks to ones like "King Porter" and "Smoky", which start off well, if Van Bergeyk didn't stop half-way through the tune, but these truncated versions really don't get a chance to develop properly. Overall, a below-par offering except possibly to guitar freaks.

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In closing, Terry Waldo's fans will be interested in Blackbird C6002 "Ohio Theater Concert", available from Lakco Record Co., 1821 Howe St., Chicago, Illinois 60614. Basically a jazz Lp (and a good one), made up from a live performance by Terry's band, the disc's ten tunes include two pulsating ragtime piano solos and a Waldo vocal-with-piano rendition of the hilarious "How Could Red Riding Hood?"

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TO OUR ACTIVE 93 YEAR OLD FELLOW RAGTIMER EUBIE BLAKE. WE ALL JOIN IN SENDING HAPPY BIRTHDAY GREETINGS

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN - THAT'S RAGTIME!

(MISSISSIPPI RAG by W. H. Krell was published early in 1897 and has the questionable honour of being the first ragtime sheet music to reach the music stores. But ragtime had already become the established domain of Negro musicians. By the time 1897 came along, a 14 year old EUBIE BLAKE was posing a problem for his devout Baptist mother, EMMA BLAKE, as she tried in vain to cool her son's growing delight in producing the characteristic sounds of ragtime from the reed organ in their home. Before the music of SCOTT JOPLIN started to become available in 1899, EUBIE BLAKE was already earning a living playing ragtime piano in what EUBIE, with an engaging smile, calls a "House of ill-repute". In that same year of 1899 EUBIE composed his CHARLESTON RAG, a well-known fact among ragtimers. To this day so many years later it is always a delightfully added fillip to hear EUBIE, as he ends a rendition of CHARLESTON RAG, announce with appropriate emphasis - "Ladies and Gentlemen - THAT'S RAGTIME!" The picture credit goes to the Newsletter, June 1975, of Harvard Graduate Society for Advanced Study and Research. The following was prepared in connection with a feature article published in Stereo Review, November 1972, entitled "The Words and Music of Noble Sissle & Eubie Blake" by William Bolcom, with Robert Kimball. These writers are the authors of The Viking Press book "Reminiscing With Sissle And Blake". Incidentally, if you missed out on this 1973 book, you might have

luck in tracking down a copy through EUBIE BLAKE MUSIC, 284A Stuyvesant Ave., Brooklyn, N. Y. 11221, U. S. A.)

WHAT IS RAGTIME?

The reader may well ask, for there have been many different definitions offered by as many different authorities, some of them too general and others too specific to serve the needs of every special case. To Eubie Blake, "ragtime" is a general term for the particular type of syncopation that was a strong and early influence on his music. Practically all musical cultures employ some form of syncopation, but the salient characteristic of the American (Eubie Blake's) style is, by and large, a matter of methodically accenting certain notes of the melody against a strong two-, three-, or four-beat pattern. It may be considered the regularization, up to a point, of certain complex African rhythms in a matrix of simple, basic rhythm cells borrowed from European dance and martial music.

If ragtime is a general term, then the word rag is an extremely specific one, for the piano rag that evolved in the latter years of the nineteenth century was a very strict form, almost a musical sonnet. Most rags have three to four "strains," or fully stated musical ideas, in periods of sixteen bars each, very much like a Sousa march. As in that type of march, the third strain, or "trio," is often in a key other than the original tonic (though related to it), often the subdominant, the key based on the fourth note of the scale of the home key. The strictness of the rag form derives in part from the nature of the dances it accompanied - as in the earlier colonial quadrilles, square-dances, and reels, there were often set patterns of dance steps that had to be completed within a certain number of bars. What was new in the rag was a combination of two things: first, the basic dance steps themselves, such as the cakewalk and the slow drag, in which the entire body was involved rhythmically with the strong beat of the music; and, second, the musical habit of syncopating the melodic figuration against this strong beat. Most rags are in 2/4 or 2/2 time, but there are also ragtime waltzes (3/4) which follow the additive waltz form of the Strausses.

On the printed page, rag rhythms look simple, and it could easily be argued that antecedents can be found in European music throughout its history. What is different about them is a matter of emphasis. A good rag player knows how to accent the syncopations so as to propel the music forward in a way that is simply not to be found in the earlier European examples; Eubie Blake's performances of his rags and later theater music are notable for a heavy emphasis on accent. If this music is performed without the complicated, subtle overlay of accentuation that is so essential to its nature, its unique musical life is lost. For easy example: those who became heartily sick of "I'm Just Wild about Harry" early or late in the Truman campaign have doubtless not heard it performed correctly; when Eubie Blake plays it, the old chestnut takes on a fresh new existence.

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DO YOU OWN A COPY OF THE RAGTIME BIBLE?

BP-900 THEY ALL PLAYED RAGTIME by Rudi Blesh & Harriet Janis. The definitive publication on Ragtime. Contains the story of Ragtime, photos, music, and a wealth of supplementary information. Every ragtimer should have a copy -- $6. 00 postpaid.

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RAGTIME WINS APPROVAL IN USSR

(Member Dick Baker is also editor of the magazine TAILGATE RAMBLINGS for the Potomac River Jazz Club. Dick was kind enough to send along an item he bumped into which had been gathered by Western Press sources in Moscow. It seems that ragtime music was singled out as a crowd pleasing event during a recent cultural exchange tour of Soviet Union cities by The St. Paul Chamber Orchestra. Here is further evidence of the capituating charm which ragtime has for first-time listeners.)

KIEV, DECEMBER 2, 1975 - The St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, now touring the Soviet Union, under the auspices of the USA-USSR Cultural Exchange Agreement, has just completed a successful four-concert stay in Kiev. Sunday afternoon's (30 November) concert at the Kiev Philharmonic was standing-room-only, just as were the other three concerts. The program, headed by Stravinsky's "Dunbarton Oaks Suite," was warmly received, but the audience exploded with enthusiastic applause in response to the final encore piece - a Scott Joplin rag. Joplin, a black American composer working at the turn of the century, thought that the rag would become America's new classical music and went on to write a rag opera, "Tree-monisha." Although Joplin's rags brought him fame and riches, his efforts to stage the opera were unsuccessful, and he died in poverty. The rag, however, has remained, if not as America's main classical style at least as an immensely enjoyable happy music that helped to popularize the rhythms of jazz. The Kiev audience that saw the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra perform a Joplin rag was alerted that something special was happening when violinist Bruce Allard exchanged his violin for a trumpet, and Larry Barnhart his French horn for a trap drum and a cardboard box that served as a bass drum. The audience in the balcony that surrounds the hall leaned out over the edge to catch the action as the stately gray-bearded Barnhart played rhythmic spoons, kicked the cardboard box or hit a cymbal for musical emphasis. Following the number, the crowd roared its approval with shouts of "Encore," "More," "Don't Go," and when it was apparent that the concert was over, "Come Back Again" was heard a number of times. The Orchestra is now in Minsk where it will give concerts on December 2 and 3 at the Philharmonic Hall. Following Minsk, the group will be in Tbilisi, Baku, Erivan and Moscow.

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THE TODAY SHOW GIVES NATIONAL TV COVERAGE TO MISSOURI RAGTIME

On Friday January 23, The Today Show chose Missouri as the particular state to be recognized in their weekly state theme to be used throughout 1976. Certain of the program video segments were produced on board the Goldenrod Showboat at St. Louis. If you caught the show then you saw and heard some of the St. Louis Ragtimers in action. The instrumentation for Maple Leaf Rag, Swipesy Cakewalk and Original Rags included piano, banjo and tuba. It was a special bonus to have TREBOR TICHENOR at the piano and AL STRICKER on banjo pay us a visit in our own homes as they performed authentic Missouri ragtime with professional pride.

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BOOK REVIEW

By Tex Wyndham

"Ragtime Rarities", selected and with an introduction by Trebor Jay Tichenor, Dover Publications, $6.95 in U.S.

Society members know Trebor Tichenor as a ragtime pianist of skill and taste; ragtime historians know him as a prime authority in the field; and sheet music collectors know him to have one of the most comprehensive rag libraries extant. So when Treb assembles the music (plus covers) to 63 piano solos into one volume, tells you that they're "rarities", and adds a brief introduction that places this incredible variety of neglected masterpieces into their proper turn-of-the-century milieu, you know you're in for something special. The results, embodied in this essential folio, are hereby guaranteed to exceed your most extravagant expectations.

Quality? Get out your "They All Played Ragtime" and check off the included works by composers singled out in TAPR's index for special title listings: James Scott (A Summer Breeze, The Fascinator, On The Pike), Charles Hunter (Just Ask Me), Charles L. Johnson ('Doc' Brown's Cake Walk), Henry Lodge (Sure Fire Rag), Thomas E. Broady (Mandy's Broadway Stroll, A Tennessee Jubilee, Whittling Remus), and others. What's even better, the book is fleshed out with equally good stuff that has been totally forgotten till now: Floyd Willis' rollicking "The Queen Rag", Thereon C. Bennett's raggedy "Sweet Pickles", David H. Silverman and Arthur R. Ward's full-bodied "That Hand-Played Rag", George Gould's swinging "Whoa! Nellie!", among many more.

Even though Harlem stride and novelty piano are not covered, and the by-now widely available Joplins, Scotts, Lambs, etc., are not duplicated, Treb presents such a broad range of styles that you'll stay captivated at the 88, irresistibly savoring each distinctive item as it comes along. Turn the page on the intricate, compounded syncopations of H. H. McSkimming's "Felix Rag" and there's Kerry Mills' strutting, unsophisticated cakewalk, "Impecunious Davis" -- followed by Will Nash's back-roomy "Glad Cat Rag", and so on.

The pros and sharks will find some dandy crowd-pleasers here (the building ride-out to Robert J. O'Brien's "The Rag Pickers Rag" would wring applause from a corpse), and some toughies too ("Majestic Rag" by Ben Rawls and Royal Neel is a highly personalized blend of rag and boogie that'll take some work from most ticklers), but a satisfying proportion of the material is first-rank ragtime that can be mastered fairly easily by someone with a basic grasp of the keyboard -- Percy Wenrich's lightly-scored "Peaches And Cream" or Fred S. Stone's "Ma Rag Time Baby", for example. In fact, this is everybody's collection; I can't imagine anyone claiming to be a ragtime pianist who would deny that this work is an exceptional bargain. Get one, by all means.

Turning to contemporary ragtime for a moment, Society member David R. Lee has forwarded copies of his latest compositions, "Tough Bananas", "Pumpkin Pie" and "Salad Dressing". THE RAGTIMER has carried information as to ordering all

five of Dave's rags, which are of medium difficulty and generally in the mainstream style of pop ragtime composers, with "Pie" and "Salad", in my view, the best and most distinctive.

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SCOTT JOPLIN REDISCOVERED - PART 10

Part 1 of this series appeared in the May/June 1972 issue of THE RAGTIMER. The opening sentence read "Beginning in 1971 a new wave of attention to the music of Scott Joplin began taking shape." As time went on we became increasingly aware of the rising proportions of that wave. Ragtimers have been amused at times by the public notion that Joplin and Ragtime is something new and really a phenomenon of the seventies. Biographical sketches about Scott Joplin have appeared by the score in the flood of recently published material. In the context of the seventies much of the information gives the appearance of new and original research efforts. Assuming that Ragtimers generally and Rudi Blesh in particular will contain themselves for the moment, it is as though ragtime disappeared in 1917 never to be heard of again until the 1970s came along. As in all human endeavours, how different impressions can be from the reality of facts.

In 1919 Blanche Merrill writing the words to M. K. Jerome's tune "JAZZ BABY" gives us a paraphrased statement of what was happening to ragtime: "My daddy was a ragtime trombone player, my mammy was a ragtime cabareter, ... But it's a birthday present from my mammy and dad. - I'm a Jazz Baby". Truth is that ragtime parents raising jazz babies have been around, all the way down the years which have followed.

S. Brunson Campbell known as the original "Ragtime Kid" of the 1890's is believed to be the only white pupil Scott Joplin had in his teaching days. Brun died in 1953. In the late period of his life he took to writing. Among his writings was a short biography written as a tribute to Scott Joplin. Ragtimers who have always known about ragtime and Joplin, will enjoy the significance of Brun's comment, which twenty-five years ago recognized then, that Joplin had old as well as new ragtime fans. The original manuscript of Brun's biography of Joplin is now a valued possession of Fisk University Library to whom we are grateful for the following re-printed recountal of Brun Campbell's recollections:

FROM RAGS TO RAGTIME

By S. Brunson Campbell

Scott Joplin, the great Negro pianist and composer of the famous "Maple Leaf Rag" and many other ragtime hits, died in 1917. He was 49 years old at the time of his death and is buried in a New York cemetery.

His funeral procession was one of the most unusual in American musical history, for every carriage in it carried the name of one of his ragtime hits. "Maple

Leaf" was on the first. It presented a unique sight as it slowly made its way through the streets of Harlem on Good Friday of 1917.

Scott Joplin was born in Texarkana, Texas, on Tuesday, November 24, 1868. At an early age he became fascinated with the piano, and although his parents were very poor they managed to get young Scott a battered old square piano on which to practice. It was very much out of tune, but young Joplin loved that old piano and practiced hours at a time. He was blessed with a natural ability for piano playing.

He became the talk of Texarkana and the surrounding country. An old German music teacher was attracted by him and interviewed him. After hearing him play he recognized that the boy had unusual musical ability, took him under his musical wing and gave him free piano lessions. Joplin never forgot that kindly old music teacher as long as he lived and sent him money and many valuable presents up to the time of the old professor's death.

His very first lessons showed that he had an uncanny knowledge of the notes and within a short time he became a good sight-reader. His father was a violinist and his mother sang and played the banjo, so no doubt he inherited his musical ability from them.

Born in poverty, young Scott commenced to dream of the day when his musical ability would earn him a decent living. His father wanted him to learn a trade or get a job to help bring in some revenue to the family budget. They had many quarrels about this, and in a fit of anger young Joplin "hit the road" to make a living playing piano wherever he could find a job.

He played all over Texas and the Midwest in saloons, honkytonks, pool halls, restaurants, and so forth. He landed in St. Louis, Mo., in 1885 when he was 17 years old and found ready work at the piano. He played in and out of St. Louis until 1893.

In that year he went to Chicago and the World's Fair, and being a very fine pianist had no trouble in obtaining a good spot. A chance meeting there with another young Negro pianist and singer (Joplin also sang some) changed the whole course of his life.

This was Otis Saunders, who recognized in Joplin's music and piano styling the making of a great composer. They formed a friendship that lasted. In fact, they became chums. Saunders, a few years younger than Joplin, was a technical musician and Joplin owed much of his success to him.

After the Chicago Fair the two of them returned to St. Louis and played piano along Market and Chestnut Sts. and all around St. Louis. Late in 1894 they went to Sedalia, Mo., a wide-open town where good pianists were in demand.

Joplin wrote his first two songs that year: "A Picture of Her Face" and "Please Say You Will." With Saunders he formed the Melody Quartette, which sang in and around Sedalia at parties, always plugging Joplin's two songs.

They convinced themselves they were good enough to go on tour, and they had several reasons for wanting to make it. They wanted to plug Joplin's songs and they wanted to see how the general public would receive his new music that was later to be called "ragtime". The tour took them through parts of Missouri, Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas and as far east as Syracuse, N. Y., where Joplin was successful in placing his two songs. M. L. Mantell published "Please Say You Will," and Leiter Bros. "A Picture of Her Face." both in 1895.

After a fairly successful tour they returned to Sedalia convinced Joplin had a new music that the public wanted. They both secured playing jobs, Joplin for a Negro tavern owner named Tony Williams who also played and who taught piano.

Then one day Saunders, Joplin and Tony Williams went into a huddle to decide on Joplin's future musical career. They decided Joplin should enroll in the George R. Smith College in Sedalia for a course in harmony and music arrangement.

He did, and after completing the course he put five of his first rags down on paper. The first was "Original Rags," which he sold to a Kansas City publisher who brought it out in 1899. The next three were his famous "Maple Leaf Rag," "Sunflower Slow Drag," and "Swipsey," a cakewalk. He sold these to a published in Sedalia who came out with them in 1899 also. The fifth was "The Favorite" sold to A. W. Perry & Sons of Sedalia. For some unknown reason this rag was not published until 1904.

After the publication of "Maple Leaf" by Stark & Son, Joplin became the "King" of Sedalia. His services as a pianist were so much in demand to play for parties and dances that he surrounded himself with the crack Sedalia pianists and placed them on these jobs. Shortly thereafter he and Saunders went to St. Louis, to where publishers Stark & Son had already moved. There Joplin wrote many more ragtime hits for them and became the most talked of musician in St. Louis. Then he went to Chicago. His friends in Chicago advised him to go to New York where he could meet people who were high in the musical world. As John Stark had opened an office in New York he felt it was the right move, so he went. Stark's wife became ill, however, and Stark closed the New York office and returned to St. Louis, but Joplin remained and wrote for other publishers there.

He was quite successful, and cut a good number of piano rolls of his own rags, which brought him considerable revenue. He never made any phonograph records.

On June 18, 1910, he married Miss Lottie Stokes, who survived him and after his death opened a rooming-house at 212 W. 138th St., New York, catering to Negroes of the theatrical profession. (Ed. Note: Miss Stokes was Scott's second wife. Just before leaving Sedalia for St. Louis he married Belle Hayden, a widow. The marriage ended in a separation and Mrs. Joplin died several years later. There was one child: a daughter who lived but several months.)

Joplin had his own publishing house in 1910, located at 151 W. 47th St., New York. It was here he published his opera "Treemonisha." He put all his musical knowledge into "Treemonisha." It was rehearsed at his home and produced at the Lincoln theatre in Harlem.

His disappointment over the failure of the opera preyed on his mind and he died a

very discouraged and broken-hearted man in 1917. His last rag, "Reflections," was written that year, and published by John Stark.

So ends the story of the little Negro pianist of Texarkana, Texas, who left that town in 1884 in rags, and went on to ragtime and riches. I was Scott Joplin's only white protege at the age of 15, and the first white pianist to learn his famous "Maple Leaf Rag" and "Sunflower Slow Drag" from the original pen and ink manuscripts and other of his early rags of 1898 and 1899, so I hope this little biography of his life will be a tribute to him and enjoyed by all of his old as well as new ragtime fans.

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LETTERS

Letters are welcome from members. Excerpts believed to be of general interest are passed along in this section of THE RAGTIMER.

Thought you would enjoy this clipping. We got our wish, a baby girl - born in a hurry. Martha and I are preparing for some upcoming jazz concerts in 1976 and are involved in education both college and pre-school, as well as performing. I am teaching a course at Rollin's College on "Jazz piano and creative improvisation at the keyboard." Hope your Bash went well! Maybe we'll make it up there next year.

Best Wishes - Jim and Martha Hession

(Sentinel Star - Orlando, Florida, Thurs. Oct. 16, 1975 by Charlie Wadsworth)

"Good things seem to be happening to deserving people this week.

Well, you might say Jim Hession was almost but not quite prepared, and that his wife, Martha, isn't very punctual.

It doesn't really matter. They now have a seven pound, one ounce bundle of joy named Amy to prove that.

It all happened rather suddenly and excitingly last Friday.

Between his show at the Polynesian Hotel at Walt Disney World six nights a week and their joint appearances at Maison Jardin each second Sunday, Jim and Martha had been taking parenthood classes at Florida Hospital after they learned they would be parents for the second time.

Last week they had been expecting Amy for a week and a half. Then on Friday morning things began to happen and first thing you know it was time, and boy, was it time!

Jim put Martha in the Hession van, got her to doing the breathing exercise she had been taught. But just as he pulled into the emergency section at the hospital he discovered Amy was already well on her way into this world.

"Practically everyone I had talked to said he or she would faint under the same circumstances. I thought it was exciting, especially to deliver your own baby. The hospital people were great. The doctors got there in a hurry, but Amy beat them to it."

"It was quite an experience," Hession added.

Yes, he's going to talk to Martha about being on time in the future, for any kind of event."

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Got together with Art Hodes when he came to Detroit in December for the Detroit Hot Jazz Society Concert. He played with Tom Saunders' Band. He is a fine pianist on rags and blues and of course takes off on dixieland standards in ensemble work. Tom Shea from North Carolina visited Detroit recently. He sat in at the Clamdigger. Kerry and Walt Gower were there and joined in as well. We had a great time. The Detroit group are concerned about Mike Montgomery's health and the restriction it is placing on his piano playing. (Letter extracts.)

Bob Seeley, Detroit, Mich., U.S.A.
(See Something Doing ...)

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The Nov/Dec issue makes me doubly sorry I couldn't attend the Bash. I still can't walk, but am hobbling with the aid of crutches.

I am preparing a ragtime folio (actually a mammoth production of 100 numbers) for Robbins Music Corp covering the entire ragtime spectrum. Also, am working on PIANO RAGTIME OF THE FIFTIES (Herwin 404), and a college course, THE HISTORY OF JAZZ, to be given for credit over the air (WCWP-FM, 88.1 - Mondays & Wednesdays from 3:00 to 4:00 p.m. and from 7:00 to 8:00 p.m. starting Feb. 2). The first 13 programs will deal with Ragtime - out of 37 hour-long shows.

With my best wishes for a happy and healthy new year - and looking forward to seeing you all again for the '76 Bash.

David A. Jasen, Flushing, N.Y., U.S.A.

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Peter Turner, Ragtime Pianist, of Chesterfield, England has been hospitalized for some time. Peter has been a member of our Society for more than eleven years. He is a professional musician. We hope that he will soon be on his feet again. We know that he has been frustrated by his handicap. He has had to postpone a series of college lectures on Ragtime and the Blues and has had to cancel out on playing dates. We send Peter our best wishes.

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SOMETHING DOING...

JOHN ARPIN - at the Chelsea Inn, 33 Gerrard St. W., Toronto - in "The Piano Bar" Mon. to Fri. 5:00 p. m. to 8:00 p. m. and with his trio in "The Chelsea Bun" Lounge Mon. to Sat. 9:00 p. m. to 1:00 a. m.

EUBIE BLAKE - The DEAN of RAGTIME - This popular recording artist and composer performs frequently at Concerts and Festivals. Does guest appearances on T. V. talk shows and is often to be heard on radio programs (watch your local press music programs for dates).

STEEN CHRISTENSEN - at the Mechanical Music Museum (MMM), Vesterbrogade 150, Copenhagen (Denmark), every 2nd & 4th Wednesday each month.

BOB DURST - (RAJAH OF RAGTIME) plays ragtime piano on the Holiday Inn circuit thru the middle U. S.

PETER FAHRENHOLTZ - plays solo ragtime piano and with bands - regularly at Jacob's Bar BQ, Arhus and at Stenkaelderen, Arhus (Hjortshoj, Denmark)

"GASLIGHT" GALE FOEHNER - at Rochester, N. Y. - Regularly performing ragtime and sing-a-longs with slides at concerts and private party engagements.

RALPH GRUGEL - and The Eagle Jazz Band at East Shore Club, Lakeshore Drive, Cleveland, Ohio, Fri. and Sat.

JOHN HASSE - at The Ordinary, Nashville, Indiana, Fri. and Sat. nights.

JIM HESSION - at the Polynesian Hotel (Tambu Lounge), Disney World, Orlando, Florida - six nights a week.

JIM KAPLAN - at the Pizza-Stein, 1428 W. Galena Ave., Freeport, Illinois on Tuesdays, Fridays and Sundays.

JOHN MADDOX	- at Town House Motor Inn, Bismarck, North Dakota, from Jan. 5 to Jan 31. - at Heritage Motor Inn, 1700 Fox Farm Rd., Great Falls, Montana from Feb. 2 to Feb. 28. - at Northern Hotel, 28th & 1st Ave. N., Billings, Montana from Mar. 1 to Mar. 27.
KEN MAYHERCY	- (RAGTIME $ BILL) at the Ramada Inn, Casper, Wyo. Feb. 23 to Mar. 20 and Signal Hill Supper Club, Craig., Col. for summer.
GLENN MEYER	- and his band at St. Louis, Mo., making regular appearances.
BOB MILNE	- at Clamdiggers Rest., 30555 Grand River, Farmington (Detroit), Mich. Mon. thru Sat. 7:30 to 12:00 p. m.
MIKE MONTGOMERY	- at The Dakota Inn, Rathskeller, Detroit, Michigan, Friday nights. (Presently on the sick list - we wish Mike a speedy recovery)
MAX MORATH	- on the road with his new show "The Ragtime Years".
DR. ELI NEWBERGER	- and The New Black Eagle Jazz Band at the Stickey Wicket Pub, West Main Street, Hopkinton, Mass., Thursday 8:00 p. m. to 12:00 p. m. (Pianist is Bob Pilsbury)
TOM NOEL	- on the road with his living portrayal shows "Mark Twain at Home", and "Mr. Jelly Lord" based on the life of Jelly Roll Morton.
CHARLIE RASCH	- with SISTER KATE, at the Cow Palace, Bancroft Road about 8 miles west of Toledo, Ohio, Fridays and Saturdays 9:00 p. m. on.
TOM SCHMUTZLER	- and the Hardware City Temperance and Ragtime Society, at Shakey's Pizza Parlor, Vernon, Conn. - Fridays and Saturdays. - at The One Way Fare, Simsburg, Conn. Sunday Nights.
BOB SEELEY	- at Clamdiggers Rest., 30555 Grand River, Farmington (Detroit), Mich., Mon. thru Fri. 4:00 to 7:00 p. m.
DAN SUMMERS	- and New Charleston Chasers regularly appearing in the Buffalo area.
TREBOR TICHENOR	- on The Goldenrod Showboat, at St. Louis, Missouri. Does weekly radio show on KWMU - FM 90.7 called "RAGOPHILE with Trebor Tichenor", Fridays at 6:00 p. m.
TERRY WALDO	- at Engine House #5, German Village, Columbus, Ohio (when not on the road).
TEX WYNDHAM	- and The Red Lion Jazz Band, appearing regularly at The Surrey Restaurant, 1101 Philadelphia Pike, Wilmington, Delaware.
BILL ZINN	- and Zinn's Ragtime String Quartet doing Concerts and College dates in the New York area.

PERFORMERS: Please keep us posted on your whereabouts and your schedule will appear in this column.

TV and entertainment guide,
December 27
to January 3, 1976

Pianist John Arpin: From ragtime to showtime